

News

MoMA Workers Urge Museum to Address Israel's Attacks on Palestine

“We respectfully urge our institution to consider the impact of its silence,” reads the workers’ open letter.



Valentina Di Liscia 3 hours ago



A pro-Palestine protest at the Museum of Modern Art on September 17, 2021 (photo Hakim Bishara/Hyperallergic)

A group of workers at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City has released an **open letter**, appended in its entirety at the end of this article, urging the institution to call for an “unconditional ceasefire” and an end to Israel’s bombardment of Palestine, which has **killed over 28,000 people** in Gaza and displaced over a million in the months since Hamas’s October 7 attack.

“Working amidst the profound silence of our institution in the face of the ongoing crisis in Gaza has become increasingly challenging for us as employees of The Museum of Modern Art,” the missive reads.

“The credibility and sincerity of our international purview is incomplete and compromised as we quietly watch Gaza’s invaluable art, culture, and history (15th century BCE), be systematically destroyed, stolen, and erased. We respectfully urge our institution to consider the impact of its silence,” the authors continue.

A signatory list shared by the group, linked [here](#), includes 25 individuals who work at MoMA in varying capacities, from full-time and part-time staff to interns and fellows; an additional 52 artists and cultural workers added their signatures in solidarity with the group. The authors are continuing to gather names and will update the list in the days to come.

The letter implores MoMA leadership to commit to the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (**PACBI**), or at minimum to conduct a “thorough review” of PACBI’s principles and develop a plan for the museum moving forward.

The missive comes just days after an unaffiliated group of organizers staged a **massive sit-in and protest** condemning Israel’s attacks and MoMA board members’ connections to military weaponry. The historic action gathered hundreds in the museum’s atrium and forced the institution to shutter for the day.

Read the letter in full below.

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A Statement by Museum of Modern Art Employees Regarding the Ongoing Crisis in Palestine

We are writing in our capacity as employees at The Museum of Modern Art to express our condemnation of Israel’s ongoing actions in Gaza and stand united in solidarity with Palestinians as they confront violence, colonial occupation, and apartheid. Over the last five months, the world has witnessed a devastating escalation of violence in the region that has disrupted the daily lives of Palestinians in unimaginable ways. “Over 100,000 Gazans are either dead, injured or missing and presumed dead” (World Health Organization 1/31/2024) and over 1 million are displaced. We firmly believe that the ongoing crisis there must be recognized as genocide, and addressed with such urgency. Furthermore, we seek to rally our colleagues globally within the cultural field to actively participate in and support this urgent movement.

These attacks have exacerbated the already challenging humanitarian conditions in Gaza, with limited access to essential services such as healthcare, clean water, food, and education. The psychological and emotional toll on the Palestinian people is immeasurable, as they cope with the trauma of witnessing the destruction of their communities and the loss of their loved ones. This continuous cycle of violence has created an environment of fear and uncertainty, impacting the mental health and well-being of entire communities. The gravity of the situation weighs heavily on our hearts, and the absence of a collective acknowledgment or response from our institution adds to the difficulty.

Working amidst the profound silence of our institution in the face of the ongoing crisis in Gaza has become increasingly challenging for us as employees of The Museum of Modern Art. As individuals deeply committed to the values of justice, empathy, and human rights, the silence amplifies the sense of urgency we feel in addressing the unfolding events. The absence of dialogue and acknowledgment within our institution hinders our ability to navigate these challenging times and undermines our mission statement “to connect people from around the world to the art of our time.” The credibility and sincerity of our international purview is incomplete and compromised as we quietly watch Gaza’s invaluable art, culture, and history (15th century BCE), be systematically destroyed, stolen, and erased. We respectfully urge our institution to consider the impact of its silence. We believe that cultural institutions, including ours, have a responsibility to engage in conversations about significant global issues, especially those affecting the lives and well-being of countless individuals.

It is imperative our collective statement clearly outlines that Zionism is neither synonymous with nor representative of Judaism, therefore a critique of the violence enacted in the name of Zionist rhetoric is in no way a suggestion of antisemitism. As museum and cultural workers, we condemn the heightened cases of both Islamophobia and antisemitism that have resulted as direct collateral of Israel’s crimes in Gaza.

As museum and cultural workers, many of whom are members of the United Auto Workers Local 2110, we applaud the International UAW’s **call for a ceasefire**. Furthermore, we want to amplify the **urgent appeal** from the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions in Gaza calling on trade unions in relevant industries to stop arming Israel.

To state clearly, here are our demands of The Museum of Modern Art:

- Call for an unconditional ceasefire and an end to Israel’s collective punishment, genocide, and siege of Gaza.
- At least one of two things: 1) Commit to The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (**PACBI**) in its entirety and/or 2) Conduct a thorough and transparent review of PACBI to learn from its principled methods and values in order to develop and establish a set of guiding principles for MoMA’s work; to be followed in the Israel/Palestine context and beyond, currently and in the future.

We extend an invitation to everyone within our community, encompassing present and former team members, artists and collaborators who have showcased their work in our galleries and graced our stages, visitors, members, donors, and neighbors, to add their signatures to this letter and unite with us.